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## BOOK REVIEWS.

THE PROBLEM OF HUMAN LIFE AS VIEWED BY THE GREAT THINKERS FROM PLATO TO THE PRESENT TIME. By Rudolf Eucken. Translated from the German by Williston S. Hough and W. R. Boyce Gibson. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1909. Pp. xxv, 582.

Eucken's is distinctively the ethical and religious,—one is at moments tempted to say, the homiletic,—history of European philosophy. The scope and method of the book are, indeed, so largely determined by a special purpose that it can be classified as a history of philosophy only by a somewhat elastic application of that term. The interest which dominates the author's survey of occidental reflection, and prescribes what aspects of that various history he shall note and what ignore, is partly, though only partly, indicated by the title which the translators have chosen for the English version. His concern is (though the antithesis itself is a strained one) with the *Lebensanschauungen* rather than the *Weltanschauungen* of the great philosophers; and it must be added that by the former expression he usually means any element of a system of doctrine,—whether theology, metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, or æsthetics,—which can be regarded either as an anticipation or a negation of one or more of the constituents of his own conception of *das Geistesleben*. The book might as aptly have borne the title of one of the author's other writings, *Der Kampf um einen geistigen Lebensinhalt*; for it is the vicissitudes of the secular struggle after what Eucken signifies by “a spiritual content of life” that the present work is designed to set forth.

The treatment of the historical material being limited by this preoccupation of the writer's mind, the reader must not expect to find in the book what it evidently was not intended to provide. Much that is ordinarily looked for in a modern history of philosophy is here absent. The amount of space allotted to the several philosophers is, for example, dictated by the pertinency of their doctrines to Eucken's personal interests, rather than by the degree of their originality, or their importance as types, or their historic influence. Thus, only two and a half

pages are devoted to Hume, while twice as many are given to St. Gregory of Nyssa; St. Augustine, with thirty-eight pages, gets nearly twice as much space as Kant, nearly three times as much as Hegel, nearly five times as much as Descartes. The aspects of the history of thought which are dwelt upon are for the most part similarly determined by a personal and selective interest. No one will be likely to learn from reading these pages that a great part (though, assuredly, by no means the whole) of European speculation has consisted in the attempt to solve certain definite problems of a primarily dialectical sort, to trace out, without falling into antinomies in the process, the 'necessary' implications of the fundamental and constitutive concepts of the human understanding. Indeed, the untechnical reader, who is sure to get much of the highest value from the book, is also sure to get a decidedly one-sided apprehension of what the 'great thinkers' were about. They were not, as a rule, consciously engaged in struggling solely for a *geistigen Lebensinhalt*; they were often doing so commonplace a thing as trying to think connectedly and consistently, or so shamelessly 'intellectual' a thing as making analytical inquiries in the logic of concepts. The present book, however, as its author observes in his preface to the English translation, "is designed to afford historical confirmation of the view that conceptions are determined by life, not life by conceptions." One could wish that the view which history is supposed to confirm were a little less vaguely and equivocally expressed; but if it means in part that other influences besides the constraining force of logical demonstration and of established empirical fact have enriched the content and directed the movement of European philosophy, it unquestionably contains much truth. Yet if ratiocination has played a smaller rôle in the affair than has sometimes been supposed, it has none the less played a greater one in history than it does in the pages of "The Problem of Human Life."

Eucken's use of historic facts is given a distinctive character, not alone by his desire to correlate other systems with his own, but also by an eagerness to make the history practically edifying, to "bring it nearer to the personal experience of the reader." Even as an historian Eucken's temper is rather that of the prophet than that of the savant; and to this fact the book owes both its best and its worst qualities. No history of philosophy since Hegel, perhaps, has more of the unity and

dramatic interest which come from conceiving of the whole movement of reflection as one continuous and often tragic adventure of the human mind in quest of a satisfying vision of the meaning of its own existence. And few historians have shown so quick a sense for the bearing even of seemingly purely theoretical doctrines upon morally significant inner attitudes of will on the part of the adherents of those doctrines. But with these qualities are closely associated certain traits not wholly favorable either to philosophic clarity or historical objectivity. To the personal taste of the present reviewer the book is much marred by an excessive use of what can only be called cant phrases,—by the wearisome iteration of a few Mesopotamian terms which, in the contexts in which they appear, sometimes serve less to convey to the reader a clear idea than to awaken in him an obscure but grateful sense of edification. That blessed but not altogether unequivocal word ‘life,’ and that scarcely less equivocal word ‘spiritual,’ recur far more insistently than seems desirable in a work of popular philosophical instruction. It is, indeed, true that Eucken has elsewhere attempted to assign a special and somewhat definite connotation to the term *Geist*. But that meaning is hardly made explicit to the reader of this book alone, who will need to turn to the *Geistige Strömungen* or to Mr. Boyce Gibson’s book for the glossary. And, in any case, the word seems to be used in ways too various to fit the definition,—which is itself far from unequivocal. This difficulty, it should be said, has been increased by translation. *Geist* and *geistig* are ambiguous enough in German; ‘spirit’ and ‘spiritual’ not only are equally ambiguous, but also fail to parallel exactly the ambiguities of the German originals. The translators, however, have done well to adhere to the single rendering, even in contexts where ‘mind’ and ‘mental’ or ‘intellectual’ would seem more natural in English; for much of the unity of the volume comes from the iteration of the term, and much of its thought is involved in the term’s ambiguities. But the translators would have more successfully naturalized Eucken’s thought in the Anglo-American world,—even though something of literal fidelity had been lost thereby,—if they had trimmed the rhetorical exuberance of such purple passages as the following, to make them conform to the more restrained traditions of English style:

Plato is, above all, the kingly thinker, penetrating beyond all appearance and rising triumphantly above all figurative thought and speech to

the invisible essence of things: with a transcendent power he sets worlds over against worlds, moves inert masses as with the lightest touch, and makes fluid the most stubborn of contradictions. But the great thinker is also by divine prerogative an artist, who is everywhere impelled to creative vision, who sketches powerful images with convincing vividness, and whose versatile fancy moulds all the work of thought into a thing of splendour.

In its English form, at any rate, this passage surely is a sort of fustian which ill becomes a book of philosophy.

The interpretation of the movement of European reflection which Eucken desires to convey thus has its outlines obscured by an overabundance of earnest but cloudy eloquence. The reader who would grasp it must endeavor, as best he can, to make clear to himself the nature of that constantly but dimly intimated entity, *das Geistesleben*, whose fortunes are so evidently intended to be the principal theme of the narrative. The clue through the confusion may perhaps be found by noting the ambiguities of the antithesis which is even more determinative in Eucken's thought than is that of 'form' and 'content' in Kant's,—the antithesis of 'inner' and 'external.' This presents itself to Eucken primarily, I think, in its religious aspect. An essential requirement in the objects of religious interest and devotion in all the deeper forms of the religious consciousness has been that those objects shall have a certain inwardness, shall be untouched by external vicissitudes, shall be—or seem—an inalienable possession which 'the world' did not give and cannot take away. Now the personal trait which most of all seems to give direction to Eucken's philosophizing is a sense of the vanity of an existence given over to the *naïve* interests and scattering activities of the natural man, and an urgent need of an object for the will that shall give to life a more adequate meaning,—one, therefore, that shall be single and secure and enduring, because inward. Eucken's philosophy, in short, seems to develop as a response to a typical phase of religious experience; and the 'spiritual life' in its original sense is a life which has been 'twice born,' which is unified by the dominance of a supreme interest, and rendered serene by an inner self-possession. Thus the chief article in Eucken's criticism of the Socialists is the externality, and therefore the inadequacy, of the goods which they promise men. Socialism's philosophy of history fails to apprehend the historic process as "a transformation of the world into a process of thought, and so into an inner life."

But "as certainly as man is a spiritual being, and in proportion as he is spiritual," the goal which Socialism proposes can never suffice him. "All the material comfort would mean only emptiness of soul. As a spiritual being he cannot reconcile himself to a life devoid of content."

Eucken's fundamental antithesis thus seems to have a primarily practical and religious import. But his method in philosophizing apparently consists largely in taking most of the historic contrasts and oppositions in philosophy and treating them as severally equivalent to this moral contrast of inner and outer, of spiritual and non-spiritual. It appears to be interchanged promiscuously with the epistemological contrast between subject and object in cognition; and with that between *a priori* and *a posteriori* elements in knowledge; and with the logical contrast between the universal and particular; and with the metaphysical contrast between material and immaterial; and with that between the 'organic' and the 'mechanistic' modes of unity; and with an extensive assortment of ethical antitheses. Thus the principal thing which Eucken finds to say of Leibniz is that to him "the mind shows itself able to produce from its own resources a coherent system of thought. . . . Mathematics brings spiritual activity into close union with the outside world, and gives to thought the proud consciousness of carrying within itself the key to the universe." So Eucken goes up and down the history of philosophy looking everywhere for recognitions or denials of the power and primacy of the inner life. But, unfortunately, all these antitheses are *not* the same antithesis, nor these inwardnesses, either logically or in their ethico-religious import, the same kind of inwardness. To treat them as such is to give to the history of occidental reflection a unity that is verbal rather than real; and it is, at the same time, to present a distorted treatment of a number of problems and systems.

I lack space to discuss certain special questions of exegesis about which doubts suggest themselves, and also to point out some illuminating felicities in the characterization of the spirit and tendencies of certain periods and schools. Upon one minor matter, however, I think it worth while to comment. Under the term "the Enlightenment" Eucken includes all movements of thought in any sense 'rationalistic,' from the early seventeenth century to (but not embracing) Hume; it is with Galileo that we first "breathe the air of the Enlightenment," while Spinoza

is preëminently the philosophical representative of the Enlightenment's spirit. So wide a departure from current usage in the employment of a semi-technical term is needlessly confusing, and involves the blurring of certain significant contrasts. The word is one about whose connotation and scope some agreement should prevail among historians of literature and philosophy. It is no service to the historiography of ideas to widen such a term's meaning to the point of extreme indefiniteness.

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THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE ENLIGHTENMENT. By John Grier Hibben. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1910. Pp. xii, 311.

This book and one by Mr. Hicks, of Cambridge, on "Stoic and Epicurean," make their appearance together as the initial volumes of a series entitled "Epochs of Philosophy," of which Professor Hibben is the editor. Thirteen volumes in all are announced in this series. The purpose, as is stated in the editorial announcement, is "to present the significant features of philosophical thought in the main periods of its development." No attempt is to be made to deal exhaustively with all the names and doctrines of the various periods, "but rather to estimate and interpret the characteristic contributions which each age may have made to the permanent store of philosophical knowledge." Moreover, "it is hoped that the present series will serve, in some slight measure at least, to deepen the impression of that fundamental unity which characterizes the progress of philosophy through the many phases of its development."

The volume before us carries out this program for the eighteenth century, the great central period of modern philosophy. The 'epoch' of the Enlightenment begins virtually in the year 1690 with the publication of Locke's famous "Essay Concerning Human Understanding," and is brought to a close in the year 1781 with the appearance of Kant's "Critique of Pure Reason" (p. 3). England, France, and Germany are the countries in which the transforming influences of the Enlightenment